

THE PLACE OF BIBLICAL AND IGBO PROVERBS IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN YOUTHS CHARACTER FORMATION

Ekenedirichukwu Eze

University of Nigeria, Nsukka

&

Onyekachi .G. Chukwuma

University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Abstract

Social vices such as examination malpractice, drug abuse, alcoholism, cultism, inordinate ambition, sexual abuse, abortion etc. are common among youths majority of who are students of various institutions of learning. There is no gain-say that these vices are generally unacceptable from both cultural and religious view points. Unfortunately, despite the obvious detrimental tendencies associated with these vices, youths actively participate in them. Obviously, most of these vices which youths engage in are the consequences of the character flaws in them. For instance, a lazy and impatient youth may indulge in vices such as examination malpractice and pre-marital sex. This work appreciates the efforts of various religious, educational and social institutions in youth character formation but it is glaring that something is still lacking. This work, therefore, posits that biblical and Igbo proverbs are instrumental in forming the character of Nigerian youths. Today's youths are future leaders and it is imperative that their characters are formed to ensure effective leadership. The study employed the comparative phenomenological methodology and the findings indicate that the biblical and Igbo proverbs are essential tools for the formation of the character of the contemporary Nigerian youths.

Introduction

There are certain character traits which contemporary Nigerian youths are often associated with. These could be positive or negative character traits. These character traits manifest in their lifestyles. Suffice it to note that characters are formed right from childhood. It is the responsibility of a child's parents and other adult members of the society to directly or indirectly teach and inculcate certain characters in a child. For instance, at home, a child learns how to be respectful when the parents teach him/her to greet elders. Over

time, various social institutions such as the schools and churches/mosques have been notable for the inculcation of certain characters.

Against this understanding, this paper posits that in as much as various social institutions have the task of character formation, there are other concepts that have the wherewithal to form the character of contemporary Nigerian youths. The objective is to examine the usefulness of biblical and Igbo proverbs in Nigerian society as a character moulding tool among youths. Biblical and Igbo proverbs are short sayings which usually contain words of wisdom, truth or morality that are based on common sense or practical experience. The book of Proverbs is a major example of the wisdom books of the Old Testament and contains instructions on many of the practical matters of daily life. Proverbs, according to Ogbalu (1965:140) are “very useful especially in Igbo land. In fact, in no other language do proverbs play a more important role than in Igbo”. Generally, proverbs are meant to teach, instruct and correct people on matters of everyday life. Barajas (2010:6) believes that “proverbs have communicative efficiency and allude to places, things, events, and values that are construed as shared points of reference for the construction of meaning.”

General Overview of the Concept ‘Proverbs’

The word ‘proverb’ is from the Latin word *proverbium*. It can also be referred to as maxim. Proverbs are well-known phrases or sentences that give advice or say something that is generally true. They are concise statements which express an astute perception about everyday life or a universally recognized truth. It includes the natural means of social communication and is expressed in commands and prohibitions that are indigenous to the family and society generally. The basic feature of proverbs is that they are popularly known, short and therefore memorable. In Thomas and McCreesh’s (1989:453) view, “A proverb is a pithy statement expressing some truth in a striking and memorable way” Proverbs refer to a collection of moral and philosophical maxims of a wide range of subjects presented in a poetic form. It is believed to be compiled by a number of unknown persons who are mostly thought to have been professional sages who offered moral and religious instructions to the young. Proverbs arrest the attention, awaken responsive thought and often remain fixed in memory.

The relevance of proverbs in shaping behavioural patterns cannot be over-emphasized. They often present a description of a basic rule of conduct that all people should follow. Barajas (2010:53) asserts that proverbs are used “to support an argumentative claim concerning behaviour, to teach or promote reflection by way of advice, to establish interpersonal rapport, to add variety to a conversation and thus entertain or engage the listeners by virtue of a verbal creativity.” Hernadi and Steen (1999) advance that proverb helps to allay any sense of guilt, shame, or regret that humans often experience as a

result of their facing a bewildering plurality of behavioral options. Apart from the relevance of proverbs in character formation, they also have educative and entertainment values, transmits people's beliefs /Customs. Ogbalu (1965) believes that a good understanding of Igbo proverbs would automatically lead to an understanding of the Igbo man, his philosophy of life, tradition, culture and mode of living because it is in them that the accumulated wisdom, religious belief, and experience of the Igbo man throughout his history have been embedded and preserved.

Proverbs are found in all languages, rooted in folklore and have been preserved by oral tradition. Barajas (2010:47), in the same line of thought asserts that

Proverbs as a linguistic genre appear to be quite popular among the various cultures of humanity. Many, if not all cultures appear to have linguistic expressions that act as proverbs. Proverbs are known to be part of the most ancient texts in the history of the world

In analyzing the relevance of proverbs in transmitting cultural beliefs, Vicky (2011) posits that proverbs are culture-loaded. They are regarded as one of the most ancient and valuable manifestations of human culture. They use succinct and pithy language to express commonly held ideas and beliefs and provide the readers with interesting glimpses at a people's geography, religion, history, social views and attitudes. Proverbs play an important role in delivering the cultures of certain nation.

Proverbs are exceptionally well suited to exert un-coerced persuasion because they are socially sanctioned authority; once it is embraced by an individual, relies on genuine trust in folk wisdom rather than potentially violent enforcement. They may be described as words which are "simultaneously authoritative and persuasive (Bakhtin, 1981). Most proverbs are characterized by distinctive acoustic and prosodic features such as rhyme, assonance, alliteration, meter, repetition and parallelism. Other poetic techniques such as hyperbole, irony, oxymoron, metaphor, simile, etc. are also seen in proverbs.

The Biblical Proverbs

The book of Proverbs is one of the poetic books of the Old Testament. Others are Psalms, Job, Ecclesiastics, and Song of Solomon. It is among the books that make up the third major division of the Old Testament. This third and last classification of the books of the Old Testament is referred to as 'The Writings' and known as *Ketubim* in the Hebrew language. "The Writings" is comprised of the remaining books of the Old Testament, which are not contained in the earlier groups- the Law and the Prophets. Unlike the rest of the classifications, which have peculiar traits and common features that supported their grouping, the books under this group lack such feature. For the

want of a nomenclature and for categorization precision, the name “The Writings” was given to them to provide a central title for the remaining books (Okwueze, 2001).

The book of Proverbs is generally regarded as a major example of the wisdom literature of the Old Testament. No wonder, Nelson (1986) describes the book of Proverbs as one of the "wisdom books" of the Old Testament, containing instructions on many of the practical matters of daily life. Roth (2013) re-echoed that the book of Proverbs fits within the genre of wisdom literature, as it is unconcerned with Israelite practices such as Temple worship or sacrifice. In the same vein, Okwueze (2001: 177) agrees that “The book of Proverbs is one of Israelite’s outstanding wisdom literatures. It is the earliest extensive wisdom document.” This book is a collection of moral and religious sayings culled from the experiences and observations of ancient Hebrew elders. It is a book of human wisdom which was originally used to teach young Jewish men how to live a prudent and moral life. According to Murphy (1998), the whole book of Proverbs is instruction, for even an experiential observation (which is best included in the neutral term “saying”) and is meant to impart some awareness or knowledge.

Traditionally, the authorship of the book of Proverbs is ascribed to King Solomon, whose wisdom as recorded in I Kings 4:30 “surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east, and all the wisdom of Egypt” More so, Solomon's name appears in Proverbs 1:1, "The proverbs of Solomon the son of [David](#), King of Israel." However, despite this traditional ascription of the book to Solomon, there has been a long standing scholarly debate on the authorship of the book. Most probably, this is because in the book, there are references to [Agur](#) (30:1) and Lemuel (31:1) as authors distinct from Solomon. More so, there are elements of disunity within the book which suggest that more than one person must have written. This tradition is now recognized, however, as an example of an ancient custom of paying tribute to famous figures and of lending new works the prestige attached to great names. (Microsoft Encarta, 2009) Likewise, Roth (2013) argues that the attribution of the book of Proverbs to Solomon, most likely stemmed from the tradition of tying a book to a biblical figure known for a certain quality. For example, the book of Psalms is associated with King David, who was known to be a poet and musician. King Solomon was known for his wisdom, and so Proverbs might have seemed like a natural fit. I Kings 4:30 records that Solomon’s wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the East, and all the wisdom of Egypt while I Kings 4:32 records that Solomon composed three thousand proverbs and one thousand and five songs.

Just as other wisdom literatures, there are poetic techniques in the book of Proverbs. An outstanding poetic technique in Hebrew poems is parallelism. According to Obiorah (2010:8), “Hebrew poems are generally arranged in parallel lines; thus parallelism as a poetic device plays an

important role in these poems.” Other scholars like Thomas and McCreesh (1989), Walke (1979) also believe that the wisdom sayings in the book of Proverbs are composed in poetic form, that is, they are cast in parallelisms. Ugwu (2010) defines parallelism as the correspondence which occurs between the phrases of a poetic line. Below are some types of parallelism which are seen in the book of Proverbs;

Synonymous Parallelism: In this type of parallelism, the second line corresponds to the first by similar words or ideas.

Prov. 4:6 “Do not forsake her, and she will keep you;
love her, and she will guard you.”

In this verse, “Do not forsake her” in the first line, is synonymous to “Love her” in the second line. “Keep” and “Guard” are also similar words.

Prov. 2:21 “For the upright will abide in the land,
and the innocent will remain in it”

“the upright” and “the innocent”, “will abide” and “will remain” are synonymous terms

Antithetic Parallelism: A verse is said to have antithetic parallelism, when two lines correspond in opposition.

Prov. 10:1 “A wise child makes a glad father,
but a foolish child is a mother’s grief”

“wise” and “foolish”, “glad” and “grief” correspond in opposition.

Comparative Parallelism: This type says that “A is better than B”

Prov. 12:9 “Better to be despised and have a servant,
than to be self-important and lack food”

Numerical Parallelism: This type corresponds by the use of numbers

Prov. 30:21 “Under three things, the earth trembles
under four it cannot bear up”

Some other literary devices in the Book of Proverbs are:

Repetition: A verse can be said to be repetitive when a word or phrase is repeated in two or more consecutive lines. A typical example is in Prov. 30:4

“Who has ascended to heaven and come down?
Who has gathered the wind in the hollow of the hand?”

Who has wrapped up the waters in a garment?
Who has established all the ends of the earth?"

Malick (2013) identifies that the book of Proverbs comprise of clever sayings using similes and comparisons.

Simile: This refers to a thing that is *like* or *as* another.

Prov. 11:22

"Like a gold ring in a pig's snout
is a beautiful woman without good sense."

Metaphor: This states that one thing is another.

Prov. 12:4a

"A good wife is the crown of her husband"

Hyperbole: This refers to a sentence that expresses an exaggeration.

Prov. 22:13

"The lazy person says, "There is a lion outside!
I shall be killed in the streets"

Oxymoron: This figure of speech expresses an idea in which apparently contradictory terms appear in conjunction

Prov. 25:15b

"and a soft tongue can break bones"

Conceptualization of Proverbs in Traditional Igbo Society

Proverb is not a peculiar concept to Jewish society. Many societies including the Igbo have various proverbs in their culture. Apart from biblical proverbs, this paper deals also with Igbo proverbs. In traditional Igbo society, proverbs are central in the propagation of Igbo culture, tradition and morals. Ugwu and Ugwueye (2004:24) describe proverbs as "short wise sayings that contain truth about life". In his view, proverb is "a short, well known saying, expressing a truth or pointing out a moral" (Quarcoopome; 1987:31). An interesting definition of proverb is given by Achebe. He avers that "... proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten" (2008:6). Proverb is an indispensable concept in traditional Igbo society; it is important in ordering their society accordingly. This is why Ogbalu (1965:140) posits that proverbs are "very useful especially in Igbo land. ...in no other language do proverbs play a more important role than in Igbo." It builds morals.

In Africa (Igbo inclusive), their "world view is predominantly religious" (Kalu: 1978:42). This is why Mbiti (1982) posits that Africans are notoriously religious, Religion permeates into all the departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible always to isolate it. An understanding of

Igbo proverbs reveals the philosophy of the Igbo which cannot be detached from their religious life. Anyanwu (2011) argues that proverbs as a genre in oral literature is couched in high philosophical tapestry. The use of Igbo proverb is a mark of mature person, erudition and elegance in speech. The Igbo people make show of their heritage and morality in their proverbs.

A good proverbial expression cheers up and captivates. Normally, the Igbo people do not hassle to explain their proverbs. Apart from children who ask for the explanation of proverbs, every adult in Igbo society is expected to not only get acquainted with proverbs, but should also know the meaning. The Igbo people believe that if the meaning of a proverb is explained to an adult, that the bride price (dowry) paid on his mother was in vain (a waste)- *onye a tuora ilu kowara ya, ego eji lua nne ya bu ihe efu*. This explains why the Igbo people were not interested in explaining the meaning and also the poetic analysis of their proverbs; it is not meant to be explained or analyzed. According to Ene in www.kwenu.com/igbo/idioms/intro.htm, “listeners are expected to figure out proverbs for themselves, draw their conclusions, and follow the gist of the talk. A mature listener comes out with the message...”. The Igbo proverbs are only explained to the children so as to get acquainted with it as they grow. It is therefore a misnomer for an adult not to understand proverbs. Such adults are generally regarded as misfit, inexperienced and naive.

However, Ore (1978), Anyanwu (2011) and Onyeocha (nd) posit that proverb is used for advice, rebuke, praise, lament, wisdom, knowledge, warning, admonition, reprove, guidance and encouragement. The use of proverbs in Igbo society is not to showcase one’s proverbial prowess or impress people. Its influence lies in the ability of the speaker to transmit wisdom, knowledge, lesson, rebuke etc. to the hearers. Proverbs are meant to convey to the people their cultural, traditional norms and the morality of the society which is embedded in their religious experiences. Any proverb which does not bring about change in the moral life of the society may not be regarded as a proverb. Proverbs should lead to an increase in wisdom and moral consciousness in the society. It is then an important apparatus in training the members of the society; especially the youths.

Character Flaws in Contemporary Nigerian Youths

In every society, there is a behavioural pattern laid down which every member is expected to adhere. The behavioural order is noticeable in the norms, customs and the traditions of the people. This dictates the character exhibited by the members of the society. Characters that are not agreeable with the societal behavioural patterns are frowned at, condemned and punished as the case may be. It seems that good character is lacking among the contemporary Nigerian youths. This is attested to by the rampant cases of immoral acts witnessed everyday in the society of which the majority is

perpetrated by the youths. The question is who is responsible for the character flaws in the contemporary youths?

However, character is “the sum of qualities shown up in a person or group, moral or ethical strength, and the description of a person’s attributes, traits and abilities” (www.wikihow.com). It is also “the complex of mental and ethical traits marking a person”, or “the stable and distinctive qualities built into an individual’s life which determine his or her response regardless of circumstance” (www.character-training.com). Character is the symbol of a person. It defines one and guides a person’s actions. One is not born with a character, it is acquired. Character is built into a person through education.

Apart from other means of education such as folktales, the adults who are the teachers of morals in the society (Adibe;2009), use proverbs to inculcate in the youths moral virtues which enable them exhibit good characters. A person who has the character of tolerance will be able to appreciate the communal value of the Igbo society. Someone with the quality of hard work will be more productive than a person without this. In the Bible and in the Igbo society, proverb is a strong instrument in inculcating morality in the life of the youths. Although, the traditional Igbo society did not achieve zero level of immorality, yet proverbs contributed to the standard of morality which they enjoyed.

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that the youths are not teachers of themselves. In every society, the adults are expected to nurture and train the young ones; including the youths and Nigerian society is not an exception. The Igbo proverb, *ebe anadu nwa nwere nna odu, ka nwa na enweghi nna na amuta ihe* (an orphan learns when a child whose father is alive is being advised). One of the methods of training is through the use of proverbs. It is unfortunate that not many adults in contemporary Igbo society know and or can make good use of Igbo proverbs. P. Obute, R. Asogwa and F. Eze (personal communication 12 June, 2013) posit that many modern Igbo men do not know neither can they quote Igbo proverbs. If proverb is not used, the essence which is to build character, correct deviant behaviours and praise worthy character, is defeated. The present Igbo man should of a necessity, acquire the knowledge of proverbs as a tool for nurturing the younger ones; especially the youths. Part of the character flaws in contemporary youths could be blamed on the inability of most adults who are the teachers of morals to use proverbs to educate the youths.

The Relevance of Biblical and Igbo Proverbs in Youth Character Formation

This sub-section, which examines how biblical and Igbo proverbs help in forming the character of youths is the crux of this paper. There is no gain-say that proverbs are essential instrument in character formation. In fact, this is one of the most important functions of proverbs. Barajas (2010) confirms that

the expression of a particular attitude or moral orientation is certainly the aim of uttering proverbs to comment on perceived social behaviour and this was the most common function of the social network's proverb use to teach or promote reflection. Onyeocha in www.crvp.org/book/series02/II-3/chapter_VI.htm posits that proverbs motivate behaviour and control relationship among individuals. In other words, proverb is an instrument for moral orientation. More so, they are indispensable instructional materials in the informal system of education. They facilitate learning by encouraging certain good characters and discouraging evil ones. For example, the Igbo proverb *Ijji na anaghi anu ndumodu, na eso ozu ala n'ili* (one who fails to listen to advice will meet his destruction), means that one should not overlook an advice given to him. Again the proverb, "cleanliness is next to godliness" can be used by a mother to her children when she tells them to clean their rooms. Biblical and Igbo proverbs which enhance the inculcation of good character would be examined below;

Hard work: There is no gain-say that there are some Nigerian youths who are unemployed because they are lazy. When they find it difficult to get a white collar job, they prefer to remain jobless than become self-employed by engaging in some money yielding ventures which demand some hard work. Some others who are either engaged in white collar jobs or self-employed are not diligent enough to retain such jobs or maintain the business. It is obvious that unemployment is the bane of most societal upheavals or vices. The following proverbs encourage hard work and diligence;
Prov. 6:4-11

Give your eyes no sleep
and your eyelids no slumber;
save yourself like a gazelle from the hunter,
like a bird from the hand of the fowler.
Go to the ant, you lazybones;
consider its ways, and be wise.
Without having any chief
or officer or ruler,
it prepares its food in summer,
and gathers its sustenance in harvest.
How long will you lie there, O lazybones?
When will you rise from your sleep?
A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to rest,
and poverty will come upon you like a robber,
and want, like an armed warrior.

Prov. 22:29

Do you see those who are skillful in their work?
They will serve kings;
they will not serve common people.

Prov. 12:27

The lazy do not roast their game
but the diligent obtain precious wealth.

Also, some Igbo proverbs such as *aka aja aja na ebute onu manumanu* (soiled hands bring oiled mouth) *anaghi agwa ote ngwo na olu di na ngwo* (no one needs to warn raphia palm wine taper that a lot of work is involved in taping the raphia palm) encourage one not to be lazy, but to be hard working.

Contentment: Garfhinger (1996) opines that greed is an extreme or excessive desire for resources, especially for property such as money, real estate, or other symbols of wealth. It is unfortunate that inordinate acquisition of wealth preoccupies the minds of so many youths that they engage in various social vices such as kidnapping and drug trafficking in order to make quick wealth. Some youths have sacrificed family members and friends at the altar of wealth. Obviously, Greed has cut short the life of many youths.

Prov. 1:19-20

Such is the end of all who are greedy for gain;
it takes away the life of its possessors.

The following Igbo proverbs teach people to be contented; *ogbenye anaghi eri anya ehi* (A poor person does not eat the cow's eye; cow's is believed to be expensive) and *afughi ka emere, eme ka afuru* (one has to manage what he has).

Obedience: According to Concise Oxford English Dictionary, obedience means the compliance with an order or law or submission to another authority. It signifies compliance with commands, instructions etc. dutiful submission to authority. (Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus) So many youths either reluctantly obey or vehemently disobey their parents, elders, authorities at school and workplace, not minding that there are rewards for obedience and consequences for disobedience. Many youths have cut short their lives because they regarded the advice of their parents /elders. Unfortunately, majority of youths feel that they owe obedience to only their biological parents and none else. The following biblical and Igbo proverbs teach youths the act of obedience:

Prov. 30:17

The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother
Will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley

and eaten by the cultures.

Okuko nti ike, na-anu ihe n'ime ite ofe (a stubborn chicken hears in the stew pot; it does not pay to be disobedient or obstinate).

Humility: Hardin (2003:792) notes that “humility is the personal quality of being free from arrogance and pride and having an accurate estimate of one’s worth” Many youths become arrogant and proud once they attain some level of achievement in life. In fact, some become proud immediately they gain admission into the higher institution. Ugwu (2012: 22) maintains that “humility is an essential ingredient to attaining greatness. There can be no enduring and result-oriented service that is devoid of humility”. It takes humility to make and sustain honest wealth. Some youths have become highly placed and influential in the society because they humbled themselves in their relationships with elders and authorities at workplace.

Prov. 18:12

Before destruction one’s heart is haughty,
and humility goes before honor.

Prov. 22:4

The reward for humility and fear of the Lord
is riches and honor and life.

There are Igbo proverbs that teach humility such as; *onye bulie onwe ya elu, ebuda ya ala* (any who exults himself, will be debased). *Onye fe eze, eze eruo ya* (if one serves the king, he will in turn become the king), teaches the importance of obedience and humility.

Honesty: This is the quality of being fair, truthful, and morally upright. One is either honest or dishonest. For many youths, dishonesty has become a norm, that they believe that they must engage in dishonest activities in order to attain great heights. Some believe that they must tell lies and deceive others in order to move ahead in life. In fact, the few who are honest are mocked by the dishonest majority. Obviously, dishonesty is a bane for some of the social vices that youths actively participate in. For instance, when the character of honesty is not formed in youths, they engage in exam malpractice and illegal businesses. There is no gain-say that honesty paves way for a sustainable greatness. An honest youth is the delight of parents/elders and authorities.

Prov. 16:13

Kings take pleasure in honest lips;
they value a man who speaks the truth.

Prov. 16:11

Honest balances and scales are the Lord's;
All the weights in the bag are his work.

Ezi okwu bu ndu (truth is life) is one of the Igbo proverbs that teaches about honesty.

Recommendations

This work maintained that biblical and Igbo proverbs are fundamental instruments in the character formation of contemporary Nigerian youths. Therefore, the following recommendations are necessary;

1. The use of proverbs in communication should not be seen as outdated and alien. This is the first step to utilizing its all-important messages as a panacea to the societal vices which is a result of character deformities in youths.
2. Parents and elders should make adequate use of proverbs in communicating with their children/wards.
3. Youths should pay adequate attention when elders speak in proverbs and they should be eager to inquire of the meaning of strange proverbs.
4. More scholars are encouraged to research and publish works on proverbs to ensure that these proverbs do not go into extinction when our elders who are believed to be professional sages are no more.
5. In the teaching of Igbo/Hausa/Yoruba languages in our secondary and tertiary institutions, the course outline should include "Proverbs" so that native proverbs would be appreciated and applied in daily living.
6. Students of higher institutions who are studying religion and language based courses should be adequately tutored on how to understand the proverbs which are in the various holy books of various religions and various languages.

Conclusion

Character is a mark of an individual; it gives a person an identity. A society is also known by the kind of character exhibited by the members of that society. It is therefore necessary to build the character of the young member of the society, especially the young to possess worthy character that is sanctioned by the society. It is unfortunate that many contemporary Nigerian youths seem not to possess good and worthy character which built the moral standard of any society.

In time past, proverbs (Biblical and Igbo) have been a veritable apparatus in building morals into the lives of the youths. Biblical proverbs seem not to convey much meaning to Biblical readers. Worst still, the Igbo proverb is probably going into extinction. Not many adults who are seen as teachers of morals know the Igbo proverbs, the meaning, lessons drawn from

it or can apply it in training of the youths. Proverbs are necessary tool for training if youths with good character orientation will be brought for the Nigerian society. Proverbs praise, convict, corrects and makes one sober if the meaning is internalized. Proverbs should therefore not be neglected, but should also be passed on to generation to come.

References

- Achebe, C. (2008). *Things Fall Apart* (Classics). London: Pearson Education
- Adibe, G. E. (2009). *Igbo Issues: Chi, Akala Aka, Ikenga, Magic, Agwu and Manipulation of Divinities*. Onitsha: Mid-field Publishers
- Anyanwu, J. (2011). "Themes and Functions as Aesthetic Devices in Igbo Proverbs". *Journal of Nigerian Languages Studies* Vol. 1 No. 3. www.inlan.edu.ng.
- Bakhtin, M.M. (1981) *The Dialogic Imagination*, Emerson, .C.T., Holquist, .M. (eds) Texas: Austin: U
- Barajas, E.D. (2010) *The Function of Proverbs in Discourse: The Case of a Mexican Transnational Social Network*, Texas: Walter de Gruyter.
- Ene, M. O. (nd). *Akpaalaokwu "Igbo Idioms"* www.kwenu.com/igbo/idioms/intro.htm. Accessed on 30/05/2013
- Garfinger, R.F. (1996) "The Sociological Basis of Greed" www.wsu.edu.socgreed.html
- Hardin, G. (2003) "Humility" *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers
- Hernadi, .P, Steen, .F. (1999) "The Tropical Landscapes of Proverbia: A Cross disciplinaryTravelogue" [http://cogweb.ucla.edu/Culture/Hernadi Steen_99.html](http://cogweb.ucla.edu/Culture/Hernadi_Steen_99.html)
- "How to Built Character through Integrity" www.wikihow.com. Accessed on 12/06/2013
- Kalu, O. U. (1978). "Precarious Vision: The African's Perception of His World" in Kalu, O. U. (ed.). *Readings in African Humanities: African Cultural Development*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- Malick, .D. (2013) "An Introduction to the Book of Proverbs" <http://bible.org/article/introduction-book-proverbs>
- Mbiti, J. S. (1969). *African Religions and Philosophy*. London: Heinemann.
- Murphy, R.E (1998) *Word Biblical Commentary; Proverbs*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers
- Nelson, T. (1986) "Proverbs, Book of" *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, Thomas Nelson Publishers

- Obiorah, M.J. (2010) "REL 411 Hebrew Poetry (Lecture Note for the use of Students)" University of Nigeria, Nsukka: Department of Religion.
- Ogbalu, F.C. (1965) *School Certificate/GCE Igbo*, Southampton: Vinoks
- Okwueze, M. I. (2001) *The Old Testament as History, Religion and Literature*, Nsukka: AP Express Publishers
- Onyeocha, I. M. (nd). "Formation of Character in Traditional Nigerian Moral Education"
www.crvp.org/book/series02/II-3/chapter_VI.htm. Accessed on 31/05/2013.
- Ore, O. O. (1978). "Modes of Communication" In Kalu, O. U. (ed.). *Readings in African Humanities: African Cultural Development*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- "Proverbs (Book of Bible)" *Microsoft® Encarta® 2009 [DVD]*. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation.
- Quarcoopome, T. N. O. (1987). *West African Traditional Religion*. Ibadan: African Universities Press.
- Roth, .E. (2013) "The Book of Proverbs"
http://www.myjewishlearning.com/texts/Bible/Writings/Wisdom_Literature/Proverbs.shtml
- Thomas, .P., McCreesh, .O. P. (1989) "Proverbs" in Brown, R.E., Fitzmyer, J.A., Murphy, R.E. (eds.) *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, India: Burns and Oates
- Ugwu, C.I. (2011) "The Literary Nature and Significance of the Biblical Psalms" in *Nsukka Journal of Religion and Cultural Studies*, Vol. 4 No. 1
- Ugwu, C. I. (2012) *From Pit to Palace: The Journey to Sustainable Greatness*, Enugu: Praise House Publishers
- Ugwu, C. O. T. & Ugwueye, L. E. (2004). *African Traditional Religion: A Prolegmenon*, Lagos: Merit International Publications.
- Vicky, .U. (2011) "[Cultural Characteristics of Proverbs](http://www.ccjk.com/cultural-characteristics-of-proverbs/)"
<http://www.ccjk.com/cultural-characteristics-of-proverbs/>
- Waltke, B.K. (1979) *The Book of Proverbs and Ancient Wisdom Literature*, Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary.
- "What is Character? Thoughts about the Importance of Good Character",
www.character-training.com. Accessed on 12/06/2013.